

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09642 040918Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /067 W
-----040937Z 123272 /21
R 040840Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1777

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, TH
SUBJECT: MAY DAY IN THAILAND QUIET

REF: BANGKOK A-100

1. THREE-DAY MAY DAY WEEKEND PASSED IN THAILAND WITHOUT INCIDENT. THERE WERE NO REPORTED VIOLATIONS OF RTG'S BAN UNDER MARTIAL LAW ON MAY DAY RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS. ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, LABOR UNION LEADERS IN THE BANGKOK AREA OBSERVED HOLIDAY BY ATTENDING RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, HOSTING MEAL AT LOCAL ORPHANAGE AND DONATING BLOOD TO HOSPITALS. IN NEARBY INDUSTRIAL PROVINCE SAMUT PRAKAN , LEADERS FROM 14 LOCAL UNIONS MET FOR DEDICATION OF JOINT LABOR CENTER.

2. PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN MARKED OCCASION WITH BRIEF MESSAGE TO ALL LABORING PEOPLE IN THAILAND. HE NOTED THAT PEACE AND STABILITY ARE TOP PRIORITY OF RTG AND CALLED UPON EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TO SETTLE LABOR CONFLICTS EQUITABLY AND THROUGH QUOTE PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS UNQUOTE. HE WARNED WORKERS AGAINST LISTENING TO UNSCRUPULOUS POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS WHO DISRUPT THE ECONOMY AND OBSTRUCT FOREIGN INVESTMENT. HE REITERATED SUGGESTION MADE APRIL 22 TO TEN LABOR LEADERS (SEE REFAIR) THAT THAILAND FIND MORE APPROPRIATE DATE FOR NATIONAL LABOR

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 09642 040918Z

DAY AND CELEBRATE IT IN THAI STYLE. HE SAID THAT SINCE THAILAND QUOTE IS STILL UNDER MARTIAL LAW, THE CELEBRATION OF THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL LABOR DAY SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN ORDER TO SECURE PEACE IN THE COUNTRY AND ALSO TO PRACTICE AUSTERITY. LABOR UNIONS OR GROUPS OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES MAY CELEBRATE THIS OCCASION WITH RELIGIOUS RITES OR ACTIVITIES BENEFICIAL TO SOCIETY, FOR EXAMPLE RAISING FUNDS TO CONSTRUCT HOSPITALS, AID SOLDIERS AND

POLICE, OR PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENTAL WORK. HOWEVER, GATHERINGS ON THIS OCCASION MUST NOT CREATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS OR BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE COUNTRY'S PEACE AND ORDER. UNQUOTE

3. MAY 3 BANGKOK POST PRINTED EDITORIAL APPROVING RTG DECISION TO PLACE CONSTRAINTS ON MAY DAY CELEBRATION AND EXPRESSING SATISFACTION THAT THAILAND SPARED THE VIOLENCE WHICH OCCURRED IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. COMMENT: RTG POLICY WAS SUCCESSFUL IN MAKING MAY DAY ESSENTIALLY A NON-EVENT. AT SAME TIME, LABOR UNION LEADERS ARE PREDICTABLY UNHAPPY OVER BAN ON MAY DAY RALLIES AND BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED WITH RTG RELUCTANCE TO PERMIT RESUMPTION OF NORMAL UNION ACTIVITIES. RTG OBVIOUSLY STILL WORRIED OVER ORGANIZED LABOR'S POTENTIAL FOR SPARKING UNREST AND/OR MAKING POLITICAL DEMANDS. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OFFICIAL THAT RTG INTRAGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP HAS BEEN CONDUCTING COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF LABOR POLICY FOR PAST MONTH BUT IS APPARENTLY HAVING DIFFICULTY ARRIVING AT CONSENSUS ON POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.
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